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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000558

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NEA/IPA FOR GOLDBERGER/SHAMPAINE; PRM FOR PRM/ANE; NSC FOR
PASCUAL; TREASURY FOR CONNOLLY
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SUBJECT: GAZA: FUEL, FOOD AND ELECTRICITY UPDATE

REF: JERUSALEM 466

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary. Four hundred thirty truckloads of commercial and humanitarian goods entered Gaza during the week of March 23-27, slightly above the weekly average. Fuel supplies into Gaza continue to meet only 20 percent of demand. The Gaza Power Plant is expecting a maintenance team on April 4 to conduct required service, but is concerned about access for needed spare parts. End summary.

Fuel and Food Shipments Remained At Restricted Levels

12. (SBU) Gaza Power Plant (GPP) contacts said that 2.11 million liters of industrial fuel were imported for the GPP through Nahal Oz for the week of March 23-27, the same level since March 13 (reftel). GPP output remains at 55 MW. Palestinian Petroleum Corporation Director Mujahid Salama told Econoff on March 28 that Gaza continues to receive 20 percent of its required fuel supply. Weekly totals for fuel imports were consistent with those since March 13:
Diesel - 880,000 liters
Gasoline - 75,000 liters
Cooking gas - 1200 tons

13. (C) Chairman of the Gaza Fuel Sector Union Mahmoud Shawwa told Econoff on March 26 that, as a result of low fuel supplies, Gaza gas stations are open only on Monday and Thursday. He said that consumers wait in lines for hours to buy the limited amounts available. Station owners are under pressure to reserve fuel for various clans, and receive threats when they do not. Fights often break out at the stations over the limited supplies, he said.

14. (SBU) Gaza-based contacts said that Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings were open March 23-27, allowing a total of 430 truckloads of commercial and humanitarian goods into Gaza - a slight increase from the 400 truckloads/week allowed in the first half of March.

Lack of Spare Parts At Hospitals

15. (C) WHO Gaza director Mahmoud Daher told Econoff on March 28 that an estimated 30 percent of the equipment in Gaza hospitals is inoperable due to a lack of spare parts. Patients do not have access to medical devices that were readily available in Gaza two years ago, he said.

16. (SBU) Gaza-based NGO contacts said on March 28 that most Gazans continue to receive just 5-7 hours of water each day

from the mains due to very low fuel supplies at all of the 140 municipal water pumps. They also noted that 40,000 cubic meters a day of mostly untreated sewage is flowing into the sea due to a lack of diesel fuel for three major coastal sewage pumps.

Power Plant Maintenance - April 4

17. (C) Gaza Power Plant managers have informed us that a team of engineers from Siemens Corp. is scheduled to arrive on April 4 to conduct maintenance on two of the GPP's four turbines. The team needs to bring into Gaza USD 5 million of replacement parts. According to GPP Project Manager Rafiq Maliha, as of March 28, the team has not received permission from the GOI to bring the parts into Gaza. GPP officials are worried that maintenance delays will impact their operations.

(Note: In November 2007, the same Siemens team performed maintenance on the other two turbines. End Note.)

WALLES